



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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## **FCC REPRESENTATIVES VISIT ALASKA TO ASSESS COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS** *Innovative Programs Identified*

Washington, DC – Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) Chief K. Dane Snowden joined by members of CGB, the Wireline Competition, and International Bureaus visited Alaska to learn about the unique communications needs facing consumers in remote areas of the nation’s largest state and to examine how the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) can assist in meeting those needs. The outreach is part of the Commission’s Rural Outreach Initiative, announced in August 2003.

The FCC representatives visited many communities throughout Alaska, from the far north community of Kotzebue and villages of Selawick and Kiana, to the southwest community of Bethel and the surrounding villages of Akiak, Holy Cross and Emmonak. In each area, the representatives traveled to health care facilities, schools, and community institutions, as well as the telecommunications service provider facilities. The representatives learned about the innovative communications solutions that enable telemedicine, distance learning and communications around the world. “At the Maniilaq Health Center and the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, the FCC representatives viewed first-hand how advanced telecommunications services help provide the best possible medical services and save lives and resources,” said CGB Chief K. Dane Snowden. Advanced telecommunications services enable video conferencing and video and radiographic images that link health personnel in different regions of the state and the country. The importance of universal service funding for rural health facilities, schools and libraries and low income consumers was a recurring theme in the many discussions the FCC staff held in these communities and villages.

Snowden said, “I was particularly interested in getting out of the cities and towns and learning about consumers’ needs in remote parts of Alaska. Through innovation and the frontier spirit, telecommunications service providers are working with health care professionals, educators, and state, local and tribal governments to bring the benefits of advanced telecommunications services to the citizens in their communities. The results are impressive.”

The FCC representatives also participated in a two-day conference hosted by the Alaska Rural Development Council, focusing on the Commission’s rural outreach initiatives, universal service programs, and wireless and satellite services. While there the representatives

provided information on how to participate in the Commission's policy and rulemaking proceedings.

The visit to Alaska continues the FCC's Rural Outreach Initiatives through activities and programs encompassed under its Indian Telecommunications Initiatives (ITI). ITI is a comprehensive program that seeks to promote understanding, cooperation and trust among American Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages, and tribal organizations; the FCC and other governmental agencies; and the telecommunications industry. The ITI program is designed to build partnerships to target specific concerns, identify potential solutions, and bring affordable, quality telecommunications services to Indian Country. Specifically, ITI seeks to increase the telephone penetration rate among tribal communities; facilitate the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas necessary to provide telecommunications services; and inform tribes and tribal consumers about financial support available through federal government programs, including Universal Service Fund programs.

For information on this and other topics of interest to tribes, visit the FCC's Tribal Initiatives Web site at [www.fcc.gov/indians](http://www.fcc.gov/indians) and Rural Outreach Web site at [www.fcc.gov/cgb/rural](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/rural).

For information on this and other topics of interest to consumers, visit our Web site at [www.fcc.gov/cgb](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb)

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on [www.fcc.gov/cgb/emailservice.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/emailservice.html).

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